



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WSDA establishes emergency veterinary corps

Olympia – About 40 veterinarians and veterinarian technicians throughout Washington have signed on to become part of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)'s recently formed Reserve Veterinary Corps.

WSDA has already identified veterinarians and veterinary technicians willing to undergo training in animal health emergency management and aid in animal health emergencies. Dr. Dan Jemelka, a WSDA veterinarian heading the program, said it is critical that Washington develop the corps in the event of an animal health crisis requiring quick action to limit its spread.

"The combined staffs of state and federal animal health agencies will not be adequate to conduct all of the activities that will be required to quickly respond to an outbreak of a foreign animal disease, such as Foot and Mouth Disease," said Jemelka. "A cadre of trained private practice veterinarians and veterinary technicians, serving as emergency relief personnel, could effectively aid in the state's response."

The more rapid of a response the state can muster can dramatically improve the chances of reducing large-scale losses by identifying and quarantining sick animals before they can infect larger herds or flocks.

Veterinarians and veterinary technicians selected for the reserve corps will be reimbursed for travel expenses while in training and hired as state employees when called to perform emergency relief work.

Training will include emergency planning, emergency response management, foreign animal diseases bioterrorism, how diseases spread and disease reporting and surveillance.

This is the first series of trainings. WSDA plans to hold these sessions annually, dependent on funding. The agency also will continue to recruit volunteers for the program.

For more information contact Dr. Jemelka at (360) 902-1967 or by e-mail, djmelka@agr.wa.gov.

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Editors: Training dates and locations are May 4, at the Ellensburg Inn, Ellensburg, and May 19, at the La Quinta Inn, Tacoma. Both sessions run from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. If you are interested in covering the training, please contact Jeff Smith, (360) 902-1813.